



# PSC NEWS

## Missouri Public Service Commission

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FY-03-162

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### **PSC SCHEDULES HEARING ON PROPOSED RULEMAKING REGARDING COLD WEATHER RULE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Jefferson City (June 6, 2003)---The Missouri Public Service Commission will hold a hearing on **July 9, 2003**, to receive comments in a proposed rulemaking proceeding involving Cold Weather Rule reporting requirements for those heat-related utility companies under PSC jurisdiction.

The hearing will be held in Room 310 of the Governor Office Building in Jefferson City. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10:00 am. The Governor Office Building meets accessibility standards required by the Americans With Disabilities Act. Any person needing additional accommodations to participate in this hearing should contact the Missouri Public Service Commission prior to the hearing at one of the following numbers: the Public Service Commission's Hotline at 1-800-392-4211 (voice) or 1-800-829-7541 (TDD).

The Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission has proposed a rule change stating that the current Cold Weather Rule reporting requirements do not provide adequate information to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cold Weather Rule. In addition, the PSC Staff states that current reports submitted by utility companies are presumed closed under state statute and can only be released through a Commission order.

"The PSC Staff wants to change the Cold Weather Rule reporting requirements to provide more detailed and useful information to the Commission, which will enhance the Commission's ability to assess the rule's effectiveness in protecting customers during the winter heating season," said Dan Joyce, PSC General Counsel. "The PSC Staff wants to make this information immediately available to the general public and avoid the time and expense involved with the Commission having to approve individual requests for these reports," Joyce added. "Revising the reporting requirements will also help provide a better understanding of the need for funding of low-income energy assistance programs."

Under the proposed rulemaking, some of the information that would be provided by the companies include:

#### **How many customers were disconnected at the end of the period:**

- 1) Of those disconnected, how many customers had service discontinued for non-payment during the period;
- 2) Of those disconnected during the period, how many customers were restored to service during the period.

(more)

**Of the customers reported as disconnected at the end of the period:**

- 1) How many had broken a Cold Weather Rule pay agreement;
- 2) How many had broken a non-Cold Weather Rule pay agreement;
- 3) How many had not been on a pay agreement.

Other information proposed to be provided would include: how many customers reconnected during the period received some sort of energy assistance (how much and from which type of agency); of those customers who had service restored, how many were placed on a Cold Weather Rule payment agreement; how much was owed at the time of disconnection of service; and how many customers received energy assistance which was insufficient in amount to retain or restore service.

“The current Cold Weather Rule reporting requirements provide good information, but there are gaps,” said Joyce. “We get a great deal of additional information by informally contacting companies and making inquiries that provide much of what we’re now seeking through the proposed rulemaking. Changing the rule, though, will allow the Commission to get the same information from all the companies, at the same time, in a similar format that will be more understandable to the general public.”

**The general public is invited to submit its comments regarding this proposed rulemaking change. Those comments should be submitted on or before July 3, 2003, to Dale Hardy Roberts, Secretary, Missouri Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.**

Since 1977, the Public Service Commission’s Cold Weather Rule has been designed to protect the health and safety of residential customers receiving heat-related utility service by placing restrictions on discontinuing and refusing to provide heat-related utility service.

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